

# DOCTRINE AND LIFE

"Unto the praise of the glory of his grace."—EPH. 1:6

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# At Home with God

GEORGE BYRNE, S.J.

## A LIVING QUESTION

THERE WAS something wrong with the disciples of Christ. They had returned satisfied with their first mission, even the devils had been subject to them; yet their self-satisfaction drew forth the warning of Satan's fall through pride. What was wrong? They were sent to announce the kingdom, but they were still strangers to its language. They didn't know how to pray. Between them and God lay a world of mystery, of which prayer alone held the key. The prayer of Christ and their prayers were poles apart, so 'when He ceased praying, one of His disciples said to Him: Lord, teach us how to pray.'

The full answer, recorded by St. Matthew, was startling. They were not to pray, as did some of their teachers, hypocrites looking for praise; nor were they to imitate the heathens pouring out words as if Heaven were moved 'by much speaking!' Prayer to 'the Father who seeth in secret' was a matter, not of words, but of heart: 'this people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me,' and there can be no advance to the vision of God except for the clean of heart: 'who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord: or who shall stand in His holy place? The innocent in hands, and clean of heart?' (Ps., 23:3, 4).

The living question was a question of attitude. All conversation is coloured by the relationship which exists between the speakers. With strangers and casual acquaintances it is formal, commonplace. The subjects are fixed—the weather, health, newspaper items. The record is to hand, ready-made; no effort of thought is required; still less is sympathy or love needed. The words are as intelligible to the baker's boy as to the doctor, to the housemaid as to the plumber. Really this is no genuine conversation if true conversation means communion: soul meeting soul: 'with thee conversing I forget all time,' (Milton, 638, P. Lost iv.). It ought to be so.

Is it? The question was vital for the disciples. It is vital for every man, who would reach his end, the vision of God, complete communion with God in the perfect life of the Trinity.

'Saying prayers' and 'praying' are quite different. The Buddhist may persistently tell his beads; he has no vision of an angel with a golden censer joining with the strain of love evoked for God. 'Saying prayers' tends to become very impersonal, memory work or reading; in any case, repeating the words of another, whether they do or do not harmonize with one's own feelings. It is an exercise which leads to formalism, and formalism suppresses the best expression of self, the warmth of love. No matter how sacred a set of words may be, in their origin or in their content, they lose their value; they may become even irreverent or meaningless on the lips of one who does not understand them, or to whom they do not apply. Thus, though the *Our Father* be the prayer of prayers, 'hallowed be thy name' and 'forgive us our trespasses' should not be forced on the lips of a little child who is as innocent of trespasses as he is unable to get round the word, and whose butterfly concepts have no place for 'hallowing.' 'Saying prayers' with grown-up people, who use these words without half-meaning them, has, for many a young soul, made of evening prayers a drudgery from which bed-time was a happy release. Possibly not much relief for growing years came from teachers who fancied that a prayer-book should meet all further requirements. After all, they themselves got through the Sunday service with the book, and some memorized formulae satisfied the hurried demands, morning and evening. No wonder that morning and evening prayers easily drop out, when they are little more than lip service, unable to fix the attention through lack of interest: 'I have bought a farm, and I must needs go and see it. . . . I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them: I pray thee hold me excused.' (Lk., 14, 18, 19). Jacob, indeed, saw a ladder 'the top thereof touching heaven,' (Gen., 28, 12), but our vision is earthly, our ears are not open to the heavenly 'harpers, harping on their harps.' How, then, can we pray?

The most critical moment in the life of St. Peter was his introduction to the Passion. His security depended on prayer: 'pray, lest ye enter into temptation.' Satan was at hand to sift him even as wheat, but Peter's eyes were heavy, he slept, and

through lack of prayer, he fell. Through prayer, however, he arose again, converted, stronger than ever, able 'to confirm his brethren.' He had learnt the fundamental lesson of the spiritual life, that it must be all-pervaded by prayer, and that it is the 'prayer of faith which saves,' (Jas., 5, 15); so he set down for us the fruit of his own experience:

'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . who hath regenerated us unto a lively hope . . . an inheritance . . . reserved in heaven for you, who, by the power of God, are kept by faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time . . . that the trial of your faith (much more precious than gold which is tried by fire) may be found unto praise and glory and honour at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom, having not seen, you love.' (I Pet., 1, 3-8).

We see how St. Peter had, at last, grasped our Lord's lesson: how we are to pray. It is not a question of words and phrases. It is a question of personal contact, of man really in communion with God, of speaking to Him and being spoken to by Him, of passing through 'the cloud of Unknowing,' and yet loving, with full certitude of knowledge 'Him, whom we do not see.'

## THE PRAYER OF FAITH

The Crossword Puzzle mind, so busy today, is interested in 'quizzes.' Not an idle quiz would be the question: 'what exactly did you mean by the words *'praestet fides supplementum sensuum defectui,'* sung in the *Tantum Ergo?*' In our Catholic liturgy, after the Mass, no act of worship is so calculated to excite personal attraction to God, through Christ, as Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The attitude of any ordinary congregation does reflect a consciousness of some special Presence, particularly at the moment of blessing with the monstrance. There is, however, no vision celestial; in fact, as St. Thomas points out in his hymn, 'while the Godhead was hidden on the cross, in the Eucharist even Christ's humanity is veiled'; the senses offer no proof, faith makes up for their failure, so are we reminded in the *Tantum Ergo*. We must rely on faith; is it an effective substitute? There was something amiss, we saw, with the disciples' prayer.

Their faith, too, was uncertain: 'Why are you fearful? Have you not faith yet?' (Mk. 4, 40). Evidently their failure in prayer was the result of insufficient faith. It took them some time to realize this, but they did come to realize it and so they begged: 'Increase our faith,' (Lk., 17, 5).

It is noticeable that only two collective requests, on behalf of the disciples, are recorded in the gospels: 'Lord, teach us how to pray,' and Lord, 'increase our faith.' They are inseparable, and the whole structure of man's supernatural life must be built on them: 'without faith it is impossible to please God,' (Heb., 11, 6), whereas the man 'full of faith,' like St. Stephen, does 'great wonders and signs among the people.'

Without faith there is no real prayer: without prayer there can be no life of faith—('my just man liveth by faith'; and 'if any of you want wisdom let him ask of God . . . and it shall be given him'). There would seem to be here what the logicians call a 'vicious circle.' Really there is a perfect circle. God is the centre of the circle of man's life. Man moves on the circumference, joined to the centre by rays of prayerful faith. The prayer that effectively reaches the centre is supernatural, because it is supernaturalised by the infused virtue of faith: 'Have the faith of God.' (Mk. 11, 22).

The first steps are the steps of faith leading the soul into the arms of God: 'for he that cometh to God, must believe that He is.' (Heb., 11, 6). These steps are the steps of prayer: no prayer, no love of God; feeble prayer, feeble love of God; ardent prayer, ardent love of God.

The disciples' petition was, indeed, a living question for them. How was their prayer to find its place among the 'prayers of all the saints,' worthy 'to be offered upon the golden altar by the angel having a golden censer, to whom was given much incense' that the fragrance of all might be a heavenly fragrance? For us it is just as living a question, since our Divine Master insists that 'we ought always to pray and not to faint,' (Lk., 18, 1). Prayer properly understood is not an item on our time-table; it is the very pulse of our supernatural life; it reveals our heart-beats for God. How, then, are we to learn to pray, as pupils in the Master's school?

## WORLD OF MYSTERY

We belong to a World of Mystery: 'we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be,' (I Jo., 3, 2). Beyond our imaginings lie the 'deep things of God,' so deep that 'it hath not entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him,' (I Cor., 2; 9). St. John and St. Paul, who wrote those words, had been favoured with rare glances of the 'deep things.' St. John at the Transfiguration of Christ, and as the seer of the Apocalypse, St. Paul 'whether in the body or out of the body . . . heard words which it is not granted to man to utter.'

John drew a beautiful picture of the garden in the World of Mystery, with the tree of life in the centre, bearing 'leaves for the healing of the nations.' There is no night there, but perfect light, unailing for 'the city hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon, to shine in it,' the day of shadows is past, 'the glory of God had enlightened it.' Of ourselves we could never reach this world. A heavy load of matter clogs our movements; the concupiscence of the flesh draws us back; the 'pride of life' darkens the vision of home, since 'it is not of the Father,' (I Jo., 2, 16).

Not unlike 'Alice,' we find ourselves on the threshold of Wonderland: the craving of our hearts, unsated by the gifts of earth's gold, tell us that there must be an answer somewhere. It is not here: it is beyond. A door bars our way. Suddenly a golden key is thrust into our hands; it fits the lock. We find that, on our knees, we can enter. The key is the gift of prayer: 'ask, and you shall receive; that your joy may be full,' (Jo., 16, 24). We fall on our knees to use it.

The paradox of human life is that man, made for this World of Mystery, fights shy of it. He belongs to two worlds, that of time which is visible and measurable, and that of eternity which can neither be seen nor calculated. The landmarks of sense are all round him, familiar from childhood, but—(does not St. Paul suggest it? . . . 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard')—what can he grasp to guide him towards eternity? One thing, and one thing only, the prayer of faith: 'faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not.' Substance is a strong word; it means the substratum, the reality on which the whole nature rests.

activity, love, is directed to something outside ourselves which we see to be good. Nothing, then, could attract us more, or claim fuller measure of our love than perfect goodness. This is found in God only. Once we realize the truth, we must say, with the Psalmist: 'what have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth?' The meaning of the 'great commandment' becomes clear: 'thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.'

Yes! we may say; it is easy enough to understand the teaching; to put it in practice is quite another matter. Does not St. Paul admit a law in the members fighting against the law of the mind? He does; but he sees the remedy: 'the grace of God, by Jesus Christ,' given to all abundantly, as St. James assures us, in answer to prayer.

(To be Continued)

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*When a person is in a state of suffering he often imagines that his life is useless in the sight of God. But when he is unable to pray or to perform good works, his sufferings and desires bring him face to face with the Divinity far more than a thousand other persons are, who are in health.*

(St. Albert the Great.)

# The First Station

CONLETH KEARNS, O.P.

IN THE prayers for the Way of the Cross which St. Alphonsus has given us, we say: 'My Jesus, it was not Pilate, no, it was my sins that condemned Thee to death.' And this is profoundly true. No sin of any individual, but played its part in the sufferings and death of our Saviour. 'The Lord hath laid on *Him* the iniquity of us all.' (Is. 53:6). And if I alone were the only sinner, Christ's love for me is so great, and His hatred of sin so real, that He would have died for me alone. 'He loved me, and delivered Himself for me.' (Gal. 2:20).

Yet this does not lessen the responsibility of those who compassed His death, and of those who condemned and crucified Him. 'The kings of the earth stood up,' says a prayer of the primitive Church, quoting the Second Psalm: 'and the princes assembled together against the Lord and his Christ. For of a truth there assembled together in this city against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel.' (Acts 4:26, 27). All the guilty parties are here summed up: the Jews with their leaders, Herod, Pilate, and his underlings 'the Gentiles.'

## I.

### THE DETERMINATE COUNSEL OF GOD

Yet that same prayer goes on at once to touch on a deeper aspect of this mystery, that aspect of it which is at the basis of all that we believe about the Incarnation and the Redemption, and at the basis, too, of the devotion which meditation on the Way of the Cross enkindles in us. 'They assembled,' it says, 'to do *what thy hand and thy counsel decreed to be done.*' (Ib. 28). The death of the Son of God was decreed by the counsel of God Himself, and carried out by His almighty hand.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For this truth of faith see, besides the passages of Scripture quoted, St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, III a, QQ. 46, 47.

In giving voice to this truth these first Christians were saying nothing more than they had heard St. Peter himself say at the beginning, on the day of Pentecost. 'This same Jesus of Nazareth, being *delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*, you Jews, by the hands of wicked men, have crucified and slain.' (Acts 2:23). The crucifixion was the work of the hands of the Gentiles, at the instigation of the Jews; yet it was carried out not merely with the foreknowledge of God, but by His determinate counsel.

Already then, when He is condemned to death by Pilate, and when Jews and Gentiles begin to work their wicked will on Him whilst the Father holds His own hand from intervening, our Saviour can say: 'My God, My God, why hast Thou abandoned me?' The 'more than twelve legions of angels,' (Matt. 26:53), that could have saved Him were withheld, and His Father handed Him over to His executioners.

And this, indeed, was our Saviour's own will. The Father had appointed this chalice of suffering for Him, and His will was set on drinking it. If the sword were to flash out to deliver Him—the sword of Michael and his legions, or the solitary sword of the impulsive Peter—how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled? (Ib. 54). The chalice which His Father had given Him, should He not drink it? (John 18:11). Thus 'He was offered because it was His own will.' (Is. 53:7). Yet this, too, was the Father's doing. For His Father it was who filled the human soul and the human will of our Redeemer with that fulness of divine charity which impelled Him to die for us because it was the Father's will.

*It was the Father's will.* To that we must always come back. God the Father permitted the triumphant hatred that condemned and crucified Him; God the Father infused the triumphant love by which 'He loved us and delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God,' (Eph. 5:2)—but all this, only as the occasion, only as the means and the consequence, of that which was primary and fundamental, His own determinate counsel, His own eternal and positive decree: His decree that His Son should die that we might live. 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, Who *by the will of the Father*, with the collaboration of the Holy Spirit, hast given life to the world *by Thy death*. . . .' (*Roman Missal*, priest's prayer before Communion).

Jesus was condemned to death, therefore, by the eternal decree of His Father, who pre-ordained His passion for the redemption of mankind. 'For us men and for our salvation He came down from Heaven. . . . Also for us was He crucified.' (Nicene Creed).

## II.

### THE MANIFEST LOVE OF GOD

*Crucifixus pro nobis.* It was for us, then, that our heavenly Father decreed the condemnation of His Son; for love of us. It is true, indeed, that 'before it is at all possible to think of man's enrichment through the grace of Christ's redemption we have to assume that much greater result of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross which is aptly expressed in the term "Atonement," by which is meant, not directly the benefit of man, but the benefit of God: that full restoration of what had been taken from God through man's sin, His honour and glory. Christ's act on the Cross has given back to the Father all that was ever taken away from Him by man, and the divine rights have been fully restored.' Yet with the justice that exacted this atonement, God's infinite wisdom has found out a way to combine His infinite love and mercy. Not God's 'benefit' alone, but man's as well, in overflowing measure, did our Father compass in the death of His Son. 'Christ's sacrifice, besides being an atonement, was also a redemption—in other words, a buying back into spiritual liberty of the human race which had become the slave of evil.'<sup>2</sup>

Yet even these great truths, the gigantic foundation stones of our Catholic faith, do not fill up the full measure of God's goodness to us in the Incarnation and the Redemption. For these great mysteries were so accomplished by God that in them He not only *exercised* infinite love towards us, but *proved* it by a thousand proofs that no attentive heart or mind can miss, 'God is love. By this has the charity of God been *manifested* to us: that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we may have life through Him. In this consists love: not in our having loved God, but in His having first loved us, and sent His Son, a propitiation for our sins.' (I John, 4:9). 'God *proves* His own

Abbot Vonier, O.S.B., *Key to . . . the Eucharist*, Collected Works, II, 229.

love to us, because when as yet we were sinners, Christ died for us.' (Rom., 5:8).

This is the secret of the sacred Passion—Love *manifesting* itself, that it may be known and loved in return. For God's infinite wisdom and power had at hand other ways of *satisfying* His justice and His love. But as a *proof* of His love, the Passion of His Son could not be surpassed, even by His infinite power and wisdom. (*Summa Theol.* III, 46, 3). 'God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting.' (John, 3:16). 'He that spared not even his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how hath he not also with him given us all things?' (Rom., 8:32). And to give *all* things is the ultimate proof of insatiable love—'sole, selfless, boundless, blind.'

Thus it is that *whenever* we look on Christ we look on God manifesting Himself bodily in human flesh, we look on One 'in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporally' (Col., 2:9).—'he that seeth Me seeth the Father,' (John, 14:9) but when we look on Christ *crucified*, then we look on God manifesting Himself for what He is in His intimate inmost life; manifesting Himself as Love, 'for God is Love,' (I John, 4:9).

### III.

#### THE OIL OF GLADNESS

The Scripture says of our divine Lord that 'because of the joy set before Him, he endured the cross, thinking nothing of the shame,' (Heb., 12:2). He looked forward to the fruit of His Passion, a glorious kingdom of innumerable souls made one with Him by Faith and Love, His own blood-brothers in the deepest sense; and He thought nothing, by comparison, of that awful price He would have to pay for this immense joy. 'Christ loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, that He might present to Himself the Church in her glory, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish,' (Eph., 5:25).

And it is, to speak humanly, this same glorious vision of the future Kingdom and Church of the redeemed, that makes His

Father, too, 'endure the cross and think nothing of the shame' of His divine Son—provided only that that cross and that shame reconcile poor fallen man to Him, and so manifest to us His Charity that we will come back to His feet in faith, in repentance, and in love. It was, then, for a task of joy and gladness that our Redeemer was anointed and sent. 'Thou hast loved justice and hated iniquity, therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness,' (Ps., 44:7, applied to Our Lord in Heb., 1:9).

'Thou hast anointed with the oil of gladness Thy only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, eternal Priest and universal King; so that, by offering Himself upon the altar of the Cross, a stainless and peace-making Victim, He might accomplish the sacred rites of the redemption of mankind; and, subjecting to His royal sway all created things, might present to Thine immense Majesty an everlasting and universal kingdom—a kingdom of truth and of life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace,' (*Preface of the Mass of Christ the King*).

In the face of this Mystery of Love—'Jesus is Condemned to Death'—no words or acts of devotion from created hearts are adequate. But we are not left resourceless, for God Himself has inspired words which teach us what to think and feel, and what to say, as we contemplate this Gift of 'the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus,' (Rom., 3:24).

'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within me bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all He has done for thee. Who forgiveth all thy iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with mercy and compassion. He hath not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our iniquities from us. As a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear Him. The mercy of the Lord is from eternity and unto eternity upon them that fear Him,' (Ps., 102).

'He that spared not even his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also with Him given us all things? Who

then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness? Shall danger, or persecution, or the sword? Neither death nor life; nor angels nor principalities nor powers; nor things present nor things to come; nor height nor depth; nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the *LOVE OF GOD* which is *IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.*' (Rom., 8:32ff).

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## DISCOURAGEMENT

*'I want your discouragement to be swallowed up and to disappear in the hope you should have in the Blood, and in the burning fire of the surpassing charity of God. Is not He more ready to pardon, than we are to sin? Is not He our physician and are not we His patients? . . . My dearest son, open the eye of your intellect in the light of our holy faith, and look and see how much God loves you. . . . And the more you see yourself fall short of all the goodness your Creator bestows on you, the more you must humble yourself and say: 'What I have not so far done, today and now I will do'. Remember that discouragement is a complete contradiction of all that you have been taught. It is a leprosy, gnawing both soul and body, and bringing on a distress of mind which is without relief. It puts a chain on the arm of holy desire, and keeps it from carrying out its good impulses. It makes the soul disgusted with itself, and makes the mind a battlefield, and the victim of a thousand vain imaginings. It quenches the light of Heaven, and darkens the light of nature. And so it leads to many infidelities, clouding over the truth of God unto which He created the soul, for He created it unto Truth, that He might give it everlasting life. Rouse up your faith, then, and your holy desire, and by a hope unshakable in the Blood, drive out the demon of discouragement.'*—(St. Catherine of Siena, in a letter to Neri di Landoccio).

# The Sacred Heart and the Interior Life

by MICHAEL O'CARROLL, C.S.Sp.

THE SOLUTION of all our problems, Father Martindale once remarked, is not Christianity but Christ. His remark is easily illustrated from the lives of the saints. Many things distinguish them from us, but one which is easily noted, is their consciousness, their constant realization of the personality of the Saviour. Saints did not live for abstractions, rules or schemes. They lived for Christ. St. Peter must have argued a good deal with himself before he decided to leave Rome and take to the Appian Way. Yet, it was not arguments that caused him to turn about abruptly and retrace his steps, to go back to the daily martyrdom of duty and the final consummation of the cross. What sent him back was the sudden vision of the Master whom he loved, and that one word from the Master's lips. When St. Teresa of Avila lay dying, someone overheard her make a remark which revealed the inner meaning of her stupendous career: 'It is time that we looked on each other.' And three centuries before, Thomas Aquinas himself, when asked by the Lord to name the reward he wished for the faithful and fruitful labours of his treatise on the Eucharist, spoke the same language: 'None other but Thyself, O Lord.'

Yes, if we could catch the fire of Christ, our lives too, would be transformed. The life of the average seeker after holiness seems to be made up of a series of partial conversions. Annual retreats, monthly days of recollection and occasions of fervour, associated with the liturgy or private devotions—these remind us of our soul and its destiny. We change for a while and then we are caught up once more in the daily work of affairs. Why do we not experience the total transforming conversion of the friends of Christ? Perhaps because we miss Christ; possibly because we forgot that our conversion must be primarily to Him, and then and only then, to a better way of life, higher standards, greater fervour. Often enough

we want to become better, more spiritual, less selfish but not necessarily more Christlike, more Christo-centric.

Sadly we must also realize, at the outset, that there is no short cut to this transforming union with the Saviour. It will do us no harm to recall the initial difficulties. There is the distance in time, the sense of remoteness that stands between us and the historical Christ. His language as contained in the Gospels is sublime, but it does not always match the idiom of our everyday problems. Then there is the question of His Presence. How is He with us? Is He an invisible companion walking at our side? Is He a kind of phantom embodied within our own person? At certain moments in the lives of the saints, His very appearance and features were substituted miraculously for theirs. Is it in any way approaching that manifestation of His power that we can say: 'I live; no longer I but Christ lives in me'?

Christ has a threefold presence—heavenly, eucharistic, mystical. He is in the glory of the blessed, corporeally at the right hand of the Father; He is in the Eucharist, really present under the appearance of bread, true God and true man; and He is present in the Church which is His Mystical Body. According to His own Word that mystical presence is intensified by prayer in brotherly union: 'Whenever two or more are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them.' To such intensity of Christ's presence are to be attributed the wonders constantly wrought in the world by simple untutored folk who are willing to submerge their individual tastes and inclinations to work with others for God.

How shall we, pursuing either of these three modes of Christ's existence, come to a realization of Him? We cannot evidently see Him in His heavenly glory. But we can receive Him in the Eucharist and we can enter into close communion with Him in His Mystical Body. To attain the fulness of each form of intimacy we have a highly efficacious means in true devotion to His Sacred Heart.

The Heart of Christ is the key to His personality. That personality is intrinsically divine so that we can never, short of the Beatific Vision, comprehend its meaning but we can approach it more and more nearly through the study of its effects on the sacred humanity. Since this humanity was flawless and endowed with every perfection, the heart of Christ must have most adequately

and fully exemplified the virtues and perfection which we expect from the human heart.

The heart represents three things—love, life, effort.

Lovers of all ages, whether drawn by natural or supernatural attraction, have spoken of the wound on the heart. It is not merely a figurative expression for, as Father Leeming has recently shown, the history of mysticism provides abundant evidence of the physical effects of divine love on the heart. This is in some cases marked or physically altered by the action of grace. The heart is the symbol of love and affection, for it is the organ of affection. The affective life, we now know, is dependent, physically, on a variety of factors, yet it is the blood stream and the central organ of blood circulation which co-ordinates these and gives them power. Men of great heart feel powerfully and intensely. It is the heart, in a sense, that dictates the course of love. How many great decisions affecting the course of history have been decisions of the heart as well as of the head. Intuition which is the characteristic intellectual process of genius, is in concrete human situations powerfully affected by the heart.

We might speak then of the Heart of Jesus as the mirror of His perfect love for men. 'Behold this heart which hath so loved men.' His love was silent and did not express itself publicly for thirty years; then, for three years He gave it full outlet. He was one of those interested in persons, turning His energies towards the improvement of persons and not merely to the elaboration of schemes and plans for the betterment of mankind. He was a religious teacher but He was primarily a healer, a physician of souls; a social reformer, not objecting to poverty as a disorder or irregularity to be removed from the social organism but bending to interest Himself in the individual poor, to bring comfort to hearts wounded and bleeding. The Gospel of St. John, is a lengthy analysis of human types passing beneath the warm rays that flowed from the heart of Christ.

So much has Jesus Christ loved, so much has He inspired love that it seems platitudinous to speak on the subject.

But the heart represents more than love—it stands in a sense for life itself. It is sometimes said that in the heart, we have the Scriptural word for the soul. But there is more in the term than that, for we do not use the word in the case of separated spirits.

It seems to apply only to the living composite of flesh and spirit. Would we have had devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, if Our Lady had not been assumed into Heaven? Similarly, if we were to believe in the bodily glorification of St. Joseph, we should thereby provide a basis for cult, private or public to his heart.

In the heart of Christ, therefore, we have as it were a summary of His life; of His excellence as a man, of His sublime mission to His fellow men. He said to St. Margaret Mary that it was the compendium of all His mysteries—the infancy, the hidden life, the public ministry, the passion and death and the subsequent glories of the Resurrection, Ascension and Pentecost.

Through the heart of Jesus we can gain a realization of His astonishing moral perfection. Every attribute of greatness was found in Jesus Christ in a most exalted degree. His conduct and bearing were stamped with the simplicity which human life derives from one dominant ideal. His powers gave forth activity and energy that were exactly proportionate to the reality about Him and were always marked by harmony—by what modern psychologists call adjustment to the situations of life. Never was a mind so free from illusion; never was an intelligence of such originality and power matched with a will so finely tempered and strong. The aesthetic and emotional impulses of Christ were given their due place in His life. His self-possession was never weakened; His virtue never found wanting. He met moments of difficulty and stress with simple spontaneous heroism. He was a realist imbued with the highest idealism; a lover of the people who radiated kingly dignity and influence; an intellectual capable of handling every thorny human problem.

It is this flawless spectacle of human perfection which we contemplate in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. What sordid situations He faced. How ugly the whole of life must have appeared to Him who was so pure, so penetrating, so divine. The load of life weighs on us and it takes heart to carry it—to keep on, to stick to the purpose. He bore the load of all mankind because being innocent and living in the midst of sinners, He was forever in an atmosphere of spiritual war, and He was to engage in the final duel with the Prince of Darkness. What heart He needed for that—not in the superficial or sentimental sense, but viewed as the essence of life's endeavour and striving.

It is to some imitation of this whole-hearted endeavour and striving that we are urged by the gesture of Christ showing us His Heart, insisting thereby on His common humanity with us, recalling the struggle and ultimate triumph of His earthly existence. The drive or dynamism of a man comes from his heart. A man of great heart is a man who undertakes great things, faces great dangers, stiffens his resolve under stress. What is it that makes for such things? Vitality? Personal urge or impact? In the high and pure sense Jesus Christ had this invaluable inner power. He never flinched; He was of those who, as the French saying has it, paid readily with His person. As a leader He belongs to the class who say: 'Come' not 'Go,' for He shared every danger and hardship and He walked ahead of us on the path He asks us to tread. Along the way His Heart is our inspiration, our strength, our solace.

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*The idea of our life here is not exact until it is merged in the idea of the mysterious morrow. Life itself does not reveal its importance until, striking it on the tomb, it rings back with an echo of eternity. It is useless to try to order one's destiny, unless one learns from death to go beyond the realms of earth and to make one's chief wealth of the things that death cannot touch.*

*At the moment of death, if I had all things but God, it would be of no use to me. And if I have God, and nothing else, I shall have all that I want, because I shall find everything in Him.—Père Sertillanges, O.P., Recueillement.*

# The Zeal of Thy House

JEROME TONER, O.P.

WE LIVE in a world of little things. And little things can do a lot of harm. They are attractive, like women, gold or power; and from a limited way of looking at them they can appear to mean everything. Because they are so little they can be had by only a few, and sometimes by only one person. That is why 'little Jack Horner sat in the Corner'; he wanted the pie for himself alone. To have full possession of things like these has driven men to wars and duels. How often in the greatest of romances as well as in the cheapest, two men fight unto death for the love of a woman. Her love is a small thing; only one can have it. Faced with such a romantic dilemma, a man either becomes saddened by the impossibility of victory, or with the hope of conquering, he is torn by anger until he strikes down the man who stands between. The passion is *jealousy*—'*a little green god with a yellow eye.*' It is the passion which urges us to do the queerest things in our moments of small-mindedness. We view our own little world with a jaundiced eye. St. Thomas explains this frame of mind in his rational way: '*but through defect of goodness, it happens that certain small goods cannot, in their entirety, be possessed by many at the same time: and from the love of such things arises the zeal of envy.*' (*Summa Theol.*, I, II, 28. 4 ad 2).

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'Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple dealers in oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money changers seated. And having made a whip of cords He drove all the sheep and oxen out of the temple, and spilled out the coin of the money changers, and overturned their tables, and said to the pigeon-dealers, "Take these things hence, and do not turn My Father's house into a market." His disciples then remembered that it was written: "Zeal for Thy House consumes Me".' (*Jn.* II). Commenting on this passage

St. Thomas says: *'Be it known that zeal really means an intensity of love, by which an intense lover puts up with nothing that is repugnant to his love. And thus it comes about that men who love their wives intensely, and do not tolerate the companionship of others in them, since it is contrary to their own love, are called jealous. Therefore, he has truly the zeal of God who cannot be patiently tolerant of anything that is against the honour of God, whom He loves above all other things.'*

Jealous and Zealous are the one word with a different shade of meaning. Zealous describes a quality that is always noble; whereas jealous people can at times be anything but noble. Jesus was the *'zealous lover of souls.'* It seems that the use of this word to describe an apostolic spirit comes originally from the Old Testament figure of God's Marriage with His People. And so with zeal was Elias zealous for the Lord God of Hosts, because the children of Israel had forsaken His covenant. In the New Testament, St. Paul speaks of the new marriage of Christ with His Church—*'I wish you could put up with a little of my folly—yes, do bear with me. For I am jealous of you with a divine jealousy; for I espoused you to one husband, so as to present you a chaste virgin to Christ.'*

Now jealousy is normally defined as *'a love that suffers no fellowship in the loved one.'*

*'A weed, albeit, an amaranthine weed,*

*Suffering no flowers except its own to mount.'*

When the idea is ennobled and becomes zeal, it enters the order of spiritual things. The lover will tolerate nothing that is destructive of his union with the beloved. A married man will rightly boot the sneaking adulterer from his door. The union of Christ with His Church—that is with us—can be destroyed by fellowship with sin, or sinners, or the devil. St. Paul says that He is jealous of his converts with a divine jealousy *'because I am afraid lest in some way, as the Serpent seduced Eve by his cunning, your minds may be corrupted and fall away from the simplicity and purity you should have toward the Christ.'* (II. Cor. XI). The Church, imitating Our Lord in the Temple, has always booted people out when they are destructive of Christian unity. With the same zeal a priest condemns sin, preaches against heresy, and speaks plainly and openly about the injustices of rich against poor. Somebody doubted

that zeal could be the effect of love, since it seems to make so many enemies; but St. Thomas answered: *'A good thing is loved in so far as it can be joined to the one who loves. Consequently everything that impedes the perfection of that communion, becomes hateful. And thus zeal arises from the love of any good thing.'* (I. II. 28, 5 ad 2). So zeal frequently finds its expression in outbursts of anger against the hateful thing that splits up the union of the lover with the beloved. There is the anger of Jesus against the money changers, the anger of the Curé of Ars against the wicked innkeeper, and the anger of any priest against what is stubbornly evil. Thus zeal should not be confused with what is really apostolic love. Chasing the merchants out of the temple, and looking across the fields of Samaria are two distinct moods in the life of Our Lord. The first is one of zeal, and the second is one of sheer love for the souls of all men. Zeal comes after love; indeed, since it repels what is hateful, it is almost a kind of hate.

St. Thomas has his own way of applying the idea of zeal to the Christian life. The scriptural background of the use of word zeal is the marriage figure. Still in this context it takes a bit of explaining, and the analogy will always break down. In his treatise on the Passions, St. Thomas discusses zeal in another way:

*'Zeal, whatever way we take it, arises from the intensity of love. For it is evident that the more intensely a power tends to anything, the more vigorously it withstands opposition or resistance. Since, therefore, love is a movement towards the object loved, as Augustine says, an intense love seeks to remove everything that opposes it.*

*'But this happens in different ways according to love of concupiscence, and love of friendship. For in love of concupiscence he who desires something intensely, is moved against all that hinders his gaining or quietly enjoying the object of his love. It is thus that husbands are said to be jealous of their wives, lest association with others prove a hindrance to their exclusive individual rights. In like manner those who seek to excel, are moved against those who seem to excel, as though these were a hindrance to their excelling. And this is the zeal of envy. . . .*

*'On the other hand, love of friendship seeks the friend's good: wherefore, when it is intense, it causes a man to be moved against everything that opposes the friend's good. In this respect, a man is said to be zealous on behalf of his friend, when he makes a point*

of repelling whatever may be said or done against his friend's good. In this way, too, a man is said to be zealous on God's behalf, when he endeavours, to the best of his means, to repel whatever is contrary to the honour or will of God.' (I, II, 28. 4).

God is the friend of everyone. And it is everyone's business, and particularly a priest's business, to be making all men the friends of God. That is God's Will. So besides vindicating God's honour, as Christ did in the temple, zeal moves us to vindicate His Will so that everything that stands against the will of God may be removed. Because zeal is essential to it, Christianity is always vigorous, at times, almost intolerant. It stands for God. It has all the qualities of Our Lord's personality, because it is Christ in the world, yesterday, today and until the end. Jesus was meek and humble; he was silent before Pilate and Herod: but Jesus could cry out in the temple and upturn not only the tables of merchants, but the whole smug set-up of the pious brigands. We must make it clear that zeal is not just a matter of smiling sweetly at people; it is more a matter of looking sin and heresy in the face, and condemning it for what it is.

Nowadays, we are half-ashamed of the Inquisitors. They are like skeletons in the cupboard of God's earthly house. And yet were they not men of zeal? They could not stand by and watch the seamless garment of Christian unity parted. If, today, the same tactics would be hopeless, it does not mean that we should shirk the work of zeal. Certain heresies have now attained the status of established fact; they are even called by some 'religions.' Towards such people—who are born into heresy—we should show the kindness of apostolic love. But there is need for the zeal of Christ in our dealings with some new-born heresies, communism for instance, or even the hypocrisy of certain Catholics whose lives profane the name of Christ among believers and unbelievers alike.

There are times, of course, when it is impossible to do anything. In such moments, we have, once more, the example of Our Lord. For Aristotle conceived zeal as a form of sadness. . . . '*The sadness of have-nots*', an idea which St. Thomas evolves in his treatise on envy. With nobler zeal we find Christ weeping over Jerusalem, because it had finally refused to come to Him and learn. We find St. Paul sad at heart about his brethren, the Jews, because they stubbornly

opposed every effort to join them to Christ. All that is left then is to be sad at heart; and pray in that agony, like Our Lord in the Garden, that God may do the seemingly impossible. This is the prayer of the zealous man, of St. Paul, of St. Catherine of Siena, or our glorious Pontiff, Pius XII, the model of zealous priests. The picture tradition leaves us of St. Dominic is of a man fired with a consuming zeal. At one time he is on fire with eloquence in his denunciation of heresy; at another he is overcome with tears, and resting his head on the altar, cries to Jesus all through the long night—*'Lord, what shall become of sinners?'*

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**'PEACE. BE STILL!'**

*O Thou, Whose word makes tempests raging  
And billow's heaving straight to cease,  
Clasp this wild heart, its strife assuaging,  
And lead it on Thy path of peace:  
Heart fever-tossed by smould'ring passions  
Each fleeting breeze to flame can blow,  
Whose rash deluded zeal but fashions  
Its own distress, its brother's woe.*

*Redeem it, Lord, from sense's surgings,  
From whims that sway the wav'ring soul,  
From creature-love's ignoble urgings;  
Fix it on its eternal Goal.  
Grant it, from thrall of things which perish,  
From doubt and dread and fret set free,  
The Life of life within to cherish,  
And find, at last, its peace—in Thee.*

(Translated from Emanuel Geibel, 1815-1884, *O Du, vor dem die Sturme schweigen*).

# Watch What You Say

C. P. FINEGAN, O.P.

DO you like saying the Rosary? Or do you find it difficult to keep your mind on the mystery that you contemplate? Do you believe in keeping your mind on what you are saying as you recite the Our Father and the Hail Mary? If you can answer 'Yes' to these questions, you will be interested in the following extract from a letter.

'In the Rosary,' our correspondent tells us, 'we say the Our Father *with our lips*, but our mind is occupied with something else. The whole man, body and soul, is worshipping God, the body by the devout recitation of the vocal part and the soul by the contemplation of the mystery; but the mind is not occupied with the vocal part while actually contemplating the mystery.'

Frequently one hears this method proposed as the correct way to say the Rosary. But those who favour it seem to labour under the impression that man's body and soul work as two independent units. The body and the soul do *not* act as independent units. They co-operate to function as a single unit. In any deliberate act in which the body and soul are engaged, the soul must be concerned about the part played by the body. This is a fact of experience. It is witnessed-to by the oft repeated cry: 'Pay attention to what you are doing.' In prayer as in everything else we must pay attention to what we are doing.

Prayer is an elevation of the mind to God, to adore him, to bless His Holy Name, to praise His goodness, to ask for His assistance, and to return thanks for His benefits.

In every prayer whether it be vocal or purely mental, there must be an elevation of the mind to God. This is known as attention to the end or object of the prayer. If we introduce words into our prayer a further consideration arises. Attention must then be directed to what we say. This attention will normally be directed to the meaning of the words that we use so that we understand and mean what we pronounce. Thus St. Augustine advised his followers to pray in such fashion that 'the heart should consider what the lips pronounce.'

There is, however, another kind of attention which is directed to the material production of the words alone as distinct from their meaning. Thus, one who reads a sentence in Latin without understanding what he says, attends to the words but not to the meaning of the words. Similarly in prayer one can attend to the words of the prayer without attending to their meaning. Obviously, such attention is of its nature inferior to the attention that directs itself to the *meaning* of the words. The latter includes the former but not vice versa.

These three forms of attention are by no means exclusive of one another. Without attention to the end or purpose of the prayer, our prayer simply does not exist as *prayer*. This above all is necessary according to St. Thomas Aquinas. In his tract *De Oratione*, he writes: 'Attention which can be had to vocal prayer is threefold: one, indeed, by which a person attends to the words that he may not be at fault concerning them; the second, by which one attends to the meaning of the words; the third, by which one attends to the object of the prayer, that is to God, and to the thing for which one is praying; and *this, indeed, above all is necessary.*' (II, II, 83, 13).

The person who, even through no fault of his own, pays attention to the words only and not to their meaning, is clearly missing something. He is missing that spiritual refreshment of mind which is the peculiar effect of attentive prayer. 'Words are used in prayer for a threefold reason. First, to arouse interior devotion by which the mind is elevated to God. . . . Therefore, *in private prayer*, words . . . should only be used in so far as they help to arouse interior devotion in the mind. If, however, the mind is distracted or in any way impeded by them, one *should cease using them*. Secondly, vocal prayer is used . . . that man may serve God . . . not only with the mind but also with the body. Thirdly, vocal prayer is used as a certain redundancy from the soul expressing itself in the body.' (loc. cit. art. 12).

Every good act done in the state of grace is meritorious of eternal life. Yet the proper and particular effect of prayer is not merit, but impetration or effective petition. If there is no prayer there is no impetration. Hence, if our prayer lacks the most necessary attention, attention to the end or object of the prayer, our verbal petition is null and void. If, on the contrary, this attention is

present then our prayer is effective with regard to petition, though not necessarily perfectly so.

But if we do not attend to the meaning of the words that we speak in private prayer, we are depriving ourselves of the spiritual refreshment and devotion that they would normally arouse. This loss is bound to be reflected in the earnestness and perseverance of our prayer. Not quite so with public prayer (prayer by a minister of the church in the name of the church), which does not depend solely on the minister for the church then supplies the necessary attention.

The Rosary is a private prayer, even though it be said in public. It is usually recited in the vernacular. Therefore, there is no excuse for one not understanding the meaning of the words. Thus, normally, there is no reason why one should not take care to have the full attention, namely, to the end and purpose of the prayer, and to the meaning of the words, which latter includes that to the words themselves.

The vocal prayers in the Rosary have been put there to help us, therefore, they are meant to be understood by the one who says them. If they cease to help us they are of no assistance to us and the recitation of the words is a distraction or burden which should be discontinued. Rarely, however, do the words in the Rosary not fulfil their purpose; and they bring devotion and refreshment to the one who recites them. Sometimes, it is true, God may so raise our minds on high to himself that we become oblivious of all else. This is a special grace from on high which God gives as he wills. It is not for *us* to presume to spurn the ordinary means of attaining perfection. If God does honour us with this extraordinary grace then we have ceased to say the Rosary and have, for a time, reached that contemplation towards which the Rosary tends to bring us. Therefore, deliberately to turn one's mind from the *Pater* and *Ave*, which we are reciting to the mystery which has been proposed for our contemplation, is incorrect and misleading.

It is noteworthy that Dominican tradition tells us that Our Lady asked St. Dominic to *preach* the Rosary. The Rosary was a method of *preaching*, the truth or mystery to be contemplated was first expounded to his hearers by St. Dominic. Then in order that they might gain enlightenment and strength from this exposition and

consideration, all recited the *Pater* and *Ave*. Clearly all attended to what they said when they recited the Our Father and Hail Mary; otherwise they would not have said them.

We do not say that one should concentrate on the *Pater* and *Ave* to the exclusion of all consideration of the mystery. On the contrary, one should place oneself in the mystery-scene concerned, and pray there to Our Lord and Our Lady. We place ourselves in spirit in the company of Jesus and Mary, saying the *Pater* and *Ave* as we consider each of the mysteries of redemption. There is no contradiction and no great difficulty in doing this. We merely *think of what we are saying and of the persons to whom we speak* in the same way as we recall past events and discussions in which we took part. These vocal prayers gain for us grace *now*, and help to increase both our understanding of the mystery that we contemplate and our devotion. For this is the purpose of contemplation, to dispel error, to make us know and love God better, and to increase our devotedness to Him.

For those who find this method of saying the Rosary too difficult a brief consideration of the mystery concerned, before or after each decade, will suffice to gain the Rosary indulgences.

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*Oh, if we lived by the life of Christ—how easy it would be, and how sweet, to live His death also! There is a very simple means of losing all our fear of death: to attach ourselves to Him Who has overcome it and Who delivers us from it. All the disasters of death, as of life, are only for the man who betrays Christ or doubts Him. He who believes and loves will live. He is already alive, amongst those shadow men who are using up, and see going from them bit by bit, with terrible speed, what they call life.—Père Sertillanges, O.P., Recueillement.*

# Purifying the Soul

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES,

Translated by VINCENT KERNS, M.S.F.S.

'AT HOME,' SAYS the *Song of Songs*, 'the flowers have begun to blossom; pruning time has come.'

Now the flowers of our hearts, Philothea, are our good desires. As soon as they appear we must take hold of the pruning-hook to weed out from our consciences all that is dead and superfluous.

To be able to marry an Israelite, a foreign girl had to 'lay aside her captive's garb, shave her head and pare her nails close.' The soul that aims at being a spouse of the Son of God must 'be quit of the old self and clothed in the new,' and turn its back on sin. Then it must pare down and shave off every kind of obstacle which distracts it from the love of God. The first step towards holiness consists in being purified from our sinful tendencies.

St. Paul's purification was instant and perfect, like St. Catherine of Genoa's, St. Mary Magdalen's, St. Pelagia's and others. But this kind of purification is as miraculous and extraordinary in the order of grace as is the resurrection of the dead in the order of nature. So we must not expect that. The ordinary purification and cure, whether of body or soul, takes place little by little, progressively, improving gradually with effort and difficulty.

The angels on Jacob's ladder had wings, but they did not fly. They went up and came down in orderly fashion step by step. We can compare the soul climbing from sin to sanctity to the dawn which does not dispel the darkness instantaneously but only little by little. The safest cure, the saying goes, is the slow one. Diseases of the soul, no less than those of the body, come on horseback at full speed but depart slowly on foot.

So courage and patience are needed, Philothea, on the road to sanctity. How sad it is to see souls begin to grow anxious, disturbed and disheartened at seeing themselves saddled with many imperfections after aiming at sanctity for some time, and almost throwing open the door of their hearts to the temptation to give up everything and go back to their former state!

On the other hand, of course, there is the greatest danger for souls tempted in the other extreme to think they are purified from every imperfection on the first day. They think they are holy before they have scarcely started, launching themselves into the air without any wings. Taken too soon out of the physician's hands, Philothea, the danger of a relapse is only too great. 'Vain, that you should be astir before daybreak,' says the Prophet, 'rest awhile before you stir abroad.' He practised this lesson himself; having been already washed and cleansed, he begs to be washed 'cleaner yet.'

The work of purifying our souls cannot and must not stop until life itself comes to an end. So we must never be disturbed at our imperfections. It is in fighting them that our perfection lies; and we cannot fight against them unless we see them, nor overcome them without coming up against them. Victory does not consist in never feeling them, but never giving way to them. To be put out by them is a sign that we do not give way to them. To be sometimes wounded in this spiritual battle is good for our humility. However, we are never the losers until we have lost either life or courage.

Imperfections or venial sins are powerless to take away our spiritual life; mortal sin alone can do that. Only we must never let them make us lose courage. 'Save me, Lord,' was David's plea, 'from the fears that daunt me, from the storm around me.' We are happily placed in this war. Providing we want to fight, we are always victorious.

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# Two Apparitions of Our Lady

JOHN MOYNIHAN

ON 19th September, 1846, the Alpine parish of La Salette in the diocese of Grenoble was the scene of one of the most notable and most controverted apparitions of Our Lady in modern times.<sup>1</sup> There, two children, Melanie Mathieu, a girl of 15, and Pierre Maximin Giraud, a boy of 11, while herding cows on a mountain side, saw a 'beautiful lady' clothed in white and gold. At first she was seated on a stone, weeping. Then she rose, moved towards them and gave them a message which they were to make known to 'all her people.' It was a warning of punishments that were to come upon them if they persisted in violation of the Sabbath and irreverent use of the Holy Name. The punishments would take the form of famine caused by failure of the potato and other crops and disease which would bring about the death of many young children.

'If my people will not submit,' said the Lady, 'I shall be forced to let go the hand of my Son. It is so strong, so heavy, that I can no longer withhold it. . . . Six days have I given you to labour; the seventh I have kept for myself and they will not give it to me. . . . Those who drive the carts cannot drive the carts without introducing the Name of my Son. These are the two things which make the hand of my Son so heavy.' The people did not submit and there was in fact widespread famine and disease.

To each of the children, the Lady confided a 'secret.' These 'secrets' were, some years later, communicated to the Pope, Pius IX, who on an occasion when someone inquired as to their nature replied: 'You wish to know the secrets of La Salette? Well, here are the secrets of La Salette: "Unless you do penance, you shall all perish".' An account of the 'secret' confided to her was given by Melanie in a brochure, published in 1879, with the approval of the Bishop of Lecce in Italy. Referring to this publication the Catholic Encyclopaedia says: 'Most of the defenders of the text of 1879 suffered censure from their bishops.'

<sup>1</sup> *Our Lady of La Salette*, by Donald M. J. Langdon, Cork: The Mercier Press, Ltd., 3s. 6d.

After investigations extending over five years, Mgr. de Bruillard, Bishop of Grenoble, issued, with the approval of the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, a pastoral letter declaring that the apparition 'bears within itself all the characteristics of truth and that the faithful have grounds for believing it indubitable and certain.' This was on 19th September, 1851. In May, 1852, he laid on the site of the apparition, the foundation stone of a great church, which is now the Basilica of Our Lady of La Salette. Pope Pius IX and his successors, Leo XIII, Benedict XV and Pius XI, have in various ways given proof of their approval of devotion to Our Lady of La Salette. A congregation of priests, the Missionaries of La Salette, founded in 1852, as a diocesan congregation passed under the authority of the Pope, in 1876, and their constitutions were formally sanctioned in 1890. The Confraternity of Our Lady of La Salette, founded in 1848, was raised to the rank of an Arch-confraternity in 1852.

The story of the apparition was not received without opposition. The resignation of Mgr. de Bruillard from the Bishopric of Grenoble, which occurred in 1852, at the age of 87, was followed, says the Catholic Encyclopaedia, by 'violent attacks on the miracle of La Salette.' Even before this St. John Vianney, Curé of Ars, who, according to his biographer, Abbé Alfred Monnin, had been one of the first to believe in the apparition, had ceased to distribute pictures and medals of La Salette. He came to this decision after two interviews with Maximin Giraud, who had visited him in 1850. Asked for an explanation his reply was: 'If what the child said to me is true, we cannot believe in the apparition.' To Abbé Monnin himself, he said: 'The child told me that it was all untrue and that he had seen nothing . . . I said to him: "My child, if you have told a lie, you must retract it." "It is not necessary," he replied; "it does good to the people; many of them are converted".'<sup>1</sup>

The doubts aroused by Maximin's retraction were a cause of great distress to the Curé, especially, it would appear, after the Bishop of Grenoble's pronouncement on the apparition. In 1858, however, when asked by a priest: 'May we, and ought we, to believe in La Salette,' he answered: 'Yes; I have received a temporal blessing from God by the mediation of the Blessed Virgin, invoked under

<sup>1</sup> *Life of St. John-Baptist Vianney, Curé d'Ars*, from the French of Abbé Alfred Monnin. London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, Ltd. Pp. 197-9.

the title of Our Lady of La Salette. I have obtained it.'

Maximin died in 1875. In his will he denied having ever retracted his story of the apparition. His words were: 'After my death, let no man pretend that I have retracted or that he has ever heard me retract the great event of La Salette, for in deceiving himself, he would deceive the world.' Melanie is said to have 'always adhered' to her account.

In later times, Léon Bloy was a characteristically impassioned defender of La Salette, which was the subject of one of his books, *Celle qui Pleure*. He published also a letter in which Melanie described her early life. Of this letter Raissa Maritain says that it is 'a most beautiful and astonishing mystical text.'<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Langdon's booklet will be of use to those who want a popular account of La Salette, of miracles at the shrine, of the devotion to Our Lady which centres there, of the Missionaries and Missionary Sisters of La Salette and of the Archconfraternity. One reader must confess to a feeling that what he says of Abbé Raymond's conduct in relation to Maximin's visit to Ars, is unfair to the redoubtable Abbé.

## THE APPARITIONS AT BEAURAING<sup>2</sup>

Among the apparitions of Our Lady in recent times, which have been officially recognised by the ecclesiastical authorities, are those which occurred at Beauraing, a village about 12 miles from Dinant in Belgium, between 29th November, 1932, and 3rd January, 1933. During that period She showed herself on more than thirty occasions to five children. The apparitions occurred under a hawthorn tree, in the garden of a convent boarding school. During the later apparitions, as at Lourdes, large crowds were present.

Our Lady appeared as a young woman, of 18 to 20 years of age; smiling; clothed in a white, pleated robe, without a girdle, obliquely crossed from top to bottom by a strip of azure blue. She was 'crowned' with rays of gold. On the later occasions She showed Her heart, which seemed to be of gold, surrounded by brilliant light.

<sup>1</sup> *Adventures in Grace*, by Raissa Maritain. New York: Longmans, Green and Co. P. 223.

<sup>2</sup> *Les Apparitions de la Sainte Vierge à Beauraing*.

During the earlier visions Our Lady was silent, but later She spoke several times. She bade the children to be always good and expressed Her desire for the erection of a chapel on the site of the apparitions, 'so that people may come here in pilgrimage.' On 21st December, She declared that She was 'the Immaculate Virgin'; four days later She asked one of the children to 'pray, pray very much'; on 1st January, another heard Her say: 'I am the Mother of God, the Queen of Heaven, Pray always.' She promised: 'I will convert sinners.' This was on 3rd January, the last day, when She confided to each of the three youngest children a 'secret,' so far undivulged. Our Lady's final words were: 'Do you love My Son? Do you love Me? Then, sacrifice yourselves for Me.'

Popular belief in the apparitions spread immediately, and it is stated that in the first year, two million pilgrims visited Beauraing. The pilgrimages are said to be increasing in size year by year. They were not interrupted even in the most dangerous periods of the recent war. After the usual investigations, the Bishop of Namur, on 2nd February, 1943, officially recognised the cult of Our Lady of Beauraing. In July, 1947, the Pope gave his blessing to the proposal to erect a memorial chapel in Beauraing and to the works of the pilgrimage. Finally, on 2nd July, 1949, the Bishop circulated to his clergy a letter affirming his personal conviction of the reality of the apparitions, and on the same date signed a decree recognising two of the many miraculous cures attributed to the intercession of Our Lady of Beauraing.

'The great lesson which Beauraing teaches us, is total confidence in Mary, whose maternal love for us has manifested and still manifests itself each day in the places which She has sanctified by Her presence. Her sovereign power, no less than Her charity, is shown, not only by bodily cures, but by the numerous total, humble, instantaneous conversions which are the invisible treasure of Beauraing.'

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# The Spiritual Life of Edel Quinn

ANSELM MOYNIHAN, O.P.

A FEW MONTHS ago, a young Christian of the Kikuyu Tribe in Kenya, Mariano Mocire, was captured by Mau Mau terrorists and given the choice between apostasy and death. He chose death. Some days later his body was found horribly mutilated, but twined around his arm was his Rosary. Mariano was a member of the Legion of Mary, and had said at a rally that he knew the Mau Mau would kill him. 'But I am ready to die for Christ,' he added. 'They will kill my body, not my soul.' It was a glorious vindication of the faith that had carried the Legion of Mary to the unpromising soil of Kenya sixteen years before. When in 1936 Edel Quinn arrived in Nairobi, as Legionary Envoy she was met everywhere with cries of discouragement. 'You don't know this place.' She did not, but she did know the goodness and power of the Mother of God in whose name she had come, and for eight stupendous years she never faltered. At last when she died on the 12th May, 1944, she left many hundreds of Praesidia behind her, as the monument of her faith.

Monsignor Riberi, the former Inter-Nuncio to China has made it known that were it not for the inspiration drawn from the life and work of Edel Quinn, he would never have faced the superhuman task of organising the Legion of Mary in China after the war. She was indeed the ideal type of the lay-apostle, setting out gaily and fearlessly to conquer the world for Christ. And it looks as if with the passage of time, her light will shine out with ever increasing brilliance. She was indeed a figure of pure light. That was how she impressed all who knew her and all who have read her life-story. There is no flaw, no shadow of self-love to mar in her the reflection of the Blessed Virgin, the Lady of her life.

She left nothing in the way of a spiritual journal or autobiography, though urged to do so. 'Not for publication,' was a phrase that often occurs in her letters, and she jokingly suggested it as an epitaph for her tombstone. There are a few spiritual notes made during retreats but they are almost impersonal and quite lacking in introspection or self-analysis. Yet the fewness and character

of these notes are themselves most revealing; they confirm the impression of complete self-forgetfulness that she made on everyone who had contact with her. Very early in her life she had done with self. Her gaze was always away from self, always fixed on God, on objective supernatural realities.

There is a certain forgetfulness of self which is just the dissipation of one's external activity—escapism, the fear of being alone. Then there is the self-forgetfulness of the true contemplative, who is absorbed in God. Edel Quinn's was of this kind; it was due not to a preoccupation with work, but preoccupation with God. For, with all her immense activity, she was first and foremost a contemplative, and all her life long she was haunted by a longing for silence and prayer. Her early dream was to become a Poor Clare. When this was frustrated by her incurable illness she quietly accepted the external frustration but did not give up the essence of her hope. She was and would remain a Poor Clare in her heart. If her life could not be hidden at least her heart would. Everybody sensed a mysterious reticence and reserve behind all her gaiety and activity. She tried to keep the inner sanctuary always inviolate. Yet it is clear enough that her spiritual life centred particularly about three great mysteries of the Faith—the mystery of the Blessed Eucharist, the mystery of the Mystical Body that is built up and sustained by the Eucharist, and the mystery of Mary, 'Sacrament' of the Holy Spirit, Mother of Christ and Mother of His Mystical Body. The great facts of the Mass and the Real Presence, of the Christ-life in souls, of Mary's loving care and our complete dependence on her—it was her vivid grasp of these that made Edel what she was, and it was her grasp of these that made her the perfect Legionary of Mary, for it is on these truths that the Legion is built. Seemingly she had grasped them before she joined the Legion, but in the Legion she found the means of giving them the full place in her life.

### *Devotion to the Eucharist*

Edel had an intense devotion to the Blessed Eucharist in its double aspect as giving us the sacrifice of Calvary through the Mass and the abiding presence in the Tabernacle. As a young girl in Tralee, she was to be seen at Mass every morning along with her mother. Later when the family went to live in Monkstown

Co. Dublin, and Edel was working in a city office, she made it a practice to attend 7 o'clock Mass daily at Dun Laoghaire or Blackrock and not return to breakfast. Apparently she remained in the church until after the 8 o'clock Mass and then went straight to work, having a snack in the office. But Sunday revealed to the full her love for the Mass. She attended two early Masses at Monkstown. Then after breakfast she would go into Clarendon Street Church, in Dublin, and remain for four more Masses. 'I could assist at Mass all day long,' she used to say and again, 'There is a terrible void in the day when one has missed Mass and Holy Communion.' It was a void she had to experience at times in Africa and it was one of her greatest sufferings. She would sometimes remain fasting for seventeen or eighteen hours in order to be able to receive Holy Communion.

With her devotion to the Mass, went, of course, devotion to the abiding presence of our Lord in the tabernacle. 'How lonely life would be without the Blessed Sacrament. . . . Our faith tells us He is in the Eucharist; let us look for Him there. We have Him every free moment on the altar. Be with Him there. Better than all books.'

### *Devotion to the Mystical Body*

St. Paul sums up the whole doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ in the phrases, 'We are in Christ,' 'We have put on Christ.' Edel Quinn seems to have pondered well over these. Here are some of her resolutions: 'To live in Christ, by the Holy Ghost and through Mary. . . . I must let Jesus live His life again in me. . . . Must ask Mary to help me to put on Christ. . . . In Christ we have everything.' And if Christ was in herself he was in her neighbour too. 'We will love our neighbour if in everybody we see Christ. How in view of that can we criticise others or speak badly of them? . . . Charity; a new commandment: 'Love one another as I have loved you.' The practical side of that: I must see You and love You in my neighbour, be prompt in the service of the legionaries, in answering letters, reports, etc.'

But it was not only in her fellow Legionaries that she saw and loved Christ. For her no soul was so poor or so degraded as not to call for her utmost service because of the Christ-life that was in it or could be restored to it. And her interest was world-wide,

truly Catholic like the Mystical Body Itself. Eagerly she followed, from Africa, the progress of the Legion throughout the world and was thrilled by each new victory. As for herself, when her task in Africa was over perhaps they would send her to Japan, China, South America? On one occasion Archbishop Leen asked her if she would be ready to set off for China. 'Yes, if I am sent there,' was the immediate answer.

It was her sense too of the Mystical Body that gave Edel her great confidence in the power of hidden sacrifice and prayer for the salvation of souls. With all her labour for souls it was in the inner current of grace that is ensured by prayer and sacrifice that she placed her greatest hopes: 'I believe more in the power of prayer than in anything . . . one's duty not only to work but to pray and sanctify oneself for those worked for.'

### *Devotion to Our Lady*

One day a priest in Nairobi asked Edel: 'Have you ever refused Our Lady anything?' 'No.' She answered at once, 'I could never refuse her anything whatsoever once I believed she wanted it.' She regarded herself as belonging completely to the Blessed Virgin and had long since made the De Montfort consecration as her slave. Next to the New Testament her favourite spiritual book was *The Secret of Mary*, which she read and re-read until it became part of the texture of her soul. And because she gave Our Lady everything she knew Our Lady would look after everything. 'Why can't we trust in Our Lady?' she would say when others got discouraged by difficulties. She on her part was never discouraged by anything, not even by herself. She had grasped as well that what Our Lady wants most from us is our littleness. 'When I make mistakes I will ask Mary to arrange things. She knows how stupid I am and how little I can do, but she is my Mother.'

She set the Blessed Virgin before her as her model in everything: 'We must renounce our natural way of looking at things,' she wrote, 'and try to adopt Our Lady's point of view so that we may be led in everything by her spirit. Let us adopt her way of looking at things, her ideas in everything and not let ourselves be ruled by our natural inclinations.' She admitted that she never spoke without first turning to Mary. It is not surprising then that wherever she went, she radiated the light and the fragrance of the

Blessed Virgin. 'As soon as one saw her,' wrote a nun belonging to a contemplative order in Africa, 'one thought of Our Lady.' And a priest writing from Nairobi: 'Edel was always perfectly natural and perfectly supernatural. I was as much impressed by her humility as by her courage. Bishops have also noticed that particularly. The good she did was largely the result of her personal radiation. Her very presence exercised an influence on people. I used to feel that she radiated something of the heavenly perfume of the Blessed Virgin.' Thus Edel fulfilled her ideal of belonging completely to Mary, of becoming completely Mary-like and of spreading the Kingdom of Mary's Immaculate Heart as the sure means of establishing the reign of her Divine Son.

### *The Martyr by Desire*

The roots of Edel's life and apostolate were then completely supernatural, theological. And in the domain of the moral virtues it is hard to find any flaw. Perhaps there was insufficient care of her health. But there are few saints in the calendar against whom some imprudence in that way could not be urged. In Edel's case as in many of theirs it was just that she didn't think of herself, she was too much taken up with God and His service. From the positive point of view what stands out most brilliantly is her courage. 'Edel never knew what fear meant,' was her mother's testimony. Frank Duff, Founder of the Legion has declared that he never encountered a stronger will than hers. 'She was utterly dauntless as she laughed her way through obstacles that would have beaten almost anybody else.' She admitted to Fr. Creedan that from her childhood she had prayed for the grace of martyrdom. And to everything she did she brought the spirit of a martyr, a witness to Christ, ready to dare and endure to the uttermost limit. We have only to think of her in Africa, still going when her weight was down to five stone and her temperature 103. When her legs refused to bear even so light a burden she had herself carried from place to place for she could still speak and spread her message. Death was in her eyes, the witnesses tell us, months before it conquered her. She fought it long but never feared it and when at last it did come she was ready for it.

Of the few personal belongings of hers that were returned to her family after her death, the most precious was the little New

Testament that had been her constant companion in Africa. There were two markers at the fourteenth chapter of St. John—apparently her reading on the morning of her last day on earth, the 12th May, 1944. 'Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many mansions. Were it not so, I should have told you, because I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and I will take you to myself; that where I am there you also may be.' Shortly after six o'clock in the evening she got a sudden heart attack. 'What is happening to me,' she cried, 'Is Jesus coming?' Yes, it was He. Her breathing became fainter and fainter and then ceased as she murmured, 'Jesus, Jesus.'

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*We must firmly believe that each man dies, whatever be the circumstances of his death, at the precise moment when God considers that he has fulfilled his destiny.*

So many human beings die prematurely, in infancy, before making choice of a career, before accomplishing their work. But what is thus temporally premature, may be of exactly right measure for the moral person who is to live eternally. There is an ideal for a man. There is a divine purpose for each man. There is an ideal for each individual personality, of which Mallarmé was thinking in the famous line: 'As at the last Eternity will change him to himself.' Supposing that ideal has been perceived, it has not always been lived up to: it has been only more or less pursued. But in any case the creature called by God to exercise his free will has had the possibility of revealing his soul, of showing his fundamental value, his essential will. When God judges that the trial has been made, that the vote is cast, that the expected collaboration has been carried through, life ends. Created causes must necessarily fall into line. Man fulfilled by death is like a ripe fruit which falls of itself.—Père Sertillanges, O.P., *Recueillement*.

# Apostle of Berlin

AUGUSTINE VALKENBURG, O.P.

THERE is an impressive solidarity and virility about German Catholics. Take, for instance, their annual congress held last year in August. They abandoned the traditional Catholic strongholds of the south and west and, faring northwards, choose as their venue, bomb-shattered poverty-stricken, much-divided Berlin. The holding of the *Katholikentag* for the first time in the capital was, above all, a tribute to the amazing vigour and steadfastness of the Catholics of Berlin whose numbers, in less than a century, had increased from a bare 50,000 to 700,000. But there was more to it than that. Neo-pagans and Communists had daubed 'God is dead' upon the ruined walls; the Congress choose 'God lives' as its theme. And, from the opening lecture, 'Only he who knows God knows man,' by Fr. Romano Guardini to Pontifical Mass in the Olympic Stadium, this theme was made actual by the numbers and bearing of the faithful who came from every zone and sector.

The thoughts of many a man in Berlin must have turned, during those days, upon the priest who had made God live for him. In the city, between the wars, they had called him 'God's beggar-man,' 'the St. Francis of Berlin,' 'the city's secret bishop.'

Exaggerated, no doubt, and infuriating. But Father Carl Sonnenschein worked so hard that he never had time to hear or heed what they called him. It may be permitted to suppose, however, that he smiled in the nurseries of heaven at the idea of Berlin's leading radical paper getting out a special evening edition on the day he died; indeed, the leader had solemnly adjudged the little Catholic priest to be 'a man of God.'

Carl Sonnenschein, the son of a plumber, was born in Dusseldorf, in 1876. Feeling that God wanted him to be a priest, Carl entered the seminary and eventually came to be numbered among the scarlet clad alumni of the Collegium Germanicum in Rome. After his ordination, in 1900, he returned to his native Rhineland and ministered successively in Aachen and Elberfeld. He had

been deeply interested as a seminarian in the social problems of the day and this interest was afforded a practical outlet in 1906 by his appointment as Chaplain to the Working Men's Club at Munchen-Gladbach.

Fr. Sonnenschein was exceptionally gifted as a speaker and a writer. These gifts he now used towards the realization of an ideal that lay close to his priestly heart: the drawing together in the bonds of charity of disparate classes of society. He addressed himself to young men, more especially, perhaps, to the intellectuals of the Rhineland. He wished them to take an interest in life, not life in the abstract, but the day to day life of their poorer and less fortunate brothers. Impatient of narrowness and make-belief, the young priest had some hard things to say to the *Studentenschaft*. He told these undergraduates that the romanticism they affected was hollow and false; that their preoccupation with affairs of honour led to the wounding of Charity; that the claims of the Mystical Body of Christ were far more pressing than those of any Student Union. He warned them of the danger of becoming academic; the knowledge they acquired must be applied to life. He insisted that a theoretical knowledge of Social Science, a glib facility in discussing, 'labour problems' and 'working conditions' was not sufficient. The real need was sympathy and a deep understanding. This was the natural basis of what was lacking: a social consciousness. He availed of every opportunity to bring diverse classes of society together. He spoke to white-collar workers on conditions in foundry and mine, and to his own workmen, he explained the exacting demands made upon those engaged in intellectual work.

The priest's labours appeared to bear fruit. The membership of the Clubs, Workmen and Students, ran well into the thousands; his ideas were striking root. Events in 1914 however, proved humanly speaking, disastrous. The outbreak of war terminated abruptly and as it proved finally Fr. Sonnenschein's work for his own people. With the dawn of peace, in 1918, came the occupation troops. Organizations were suspect; efforts to revive the Clubs failed. Fr. Sonnenschein's departure for Berlin, in 1919, would seem to have been the result of this failure. Unknown to him God had turned over a leaf in his life; the last and most important chapter was about to begin. As gold is tried in the fire, so would

this Rhineland priest be tried and tested in a strange city.

If Fr. Sonnenschein had hopes of organizing in Berlin, social training centres such as he had had at home, he was quickly undeceived. For his arrival in the city coincided with the worst era to date in Berlin's history. A people near to the verge of starvation were experiencing the misery of despair and want; then, as now, everything that had once seemed mighty and permanent had ceased to exist or have significance. Materialism reigned supreme; egoism, brutal and unabashed, was rampant, and this too among the young whom he had hoped to guide and save from the whirlpool of post-war self-pity. Yes, Berlin chaotic and irreligious, proved overpowering. It swept away his pre-arranged plans but it did not daunt him. 'The feverish smouldering city' he was to come to know intimately and, in some strange way, to love. But he was never deceived. 'This city knows as none other how to make life hard.' The priest came to know how it was that the city lights allured, not only the gifted, the rich, the beautiful but also the poor, the vicious, the abnormal: Berlin repelled, yet attracted, men; it held and haunted them drawing them away from the high clear air of the countryside. 'After three generations the strength and aroma of health and heather disappear.' The Berlin Corporation Shelters for the Homeless housed in 1925 thousands of men and women; many thousands more spent the nights in railway stations and hallways; 21,000 crippled children and 44,000 war-wounded, lived somehow within the city boundaries. Figures then meant something and Father Sonnenschein read in these, not some scenario for 'The Symphony of a Great City,' but 'The Cry of the Despairing.'

In a quiet street, within walking distance of his hospital chaplaincy, he set up office. It soon became known among the hopeless as a place of refuge, an unfailing source of help and counsel. 'You need never be lost in Berlin,' wrote a priest-contemporary, 'if you want advice or a way out, Fr. Sonnerschein always has the right word and the right way.' Everyone who came to him, he succeeded somehow in providing for—lodging, help, work, a free meal. He kept within the recesses of his desk for urgent cases coffee and food. Artists and professional men, 'temporarily embarrassed' were attracted by the priest: painters, stagefolk, writers, art-students and many of the impossible

characters of a great city. But no character proved impossible to Fr. Sonnenschein. In the most fantastical and sin-laden visitor he glimpsed something of that image of God which it was his duty as a priest to cherish. The warmth of his welcome and his endless patience rarely failed to have effect. In giving back hope to men he gave them too the will, indeed the desire, to live for Someone. Towards the end of Fr. Sonnenschein's life as many as seventy people came daily to his office to consult him. Behind heaps of correspondence and index cards they found one who never seemed to grow weary or impatient. No matter how trivial the difficulty, he gave to it his undivided attention. He gave wise advice, in the right tone, to the young couple who had quarrelled; he would arrange a concert for the stranded artiste; yes, here was the address of a furnished room; well, a modest loan could be managed.

No wonder an ever-widening circle of people sought out Fr. Sonnenschein. He wrote in the non-Catholic press upon 'the dire straits of the artist and highly-skilled worker.' Characteristically he went to the root of the problem. 'In an age which thinks only of material things, how is the composer, the dramatist, the poet, the student, to find a living?' From his vast acquaintanceship with conditions, he drew searing pictures of real life. There was the student of psycho-therapy who bought and sold scrap-iron for a livelihood; the philologist, newly possessed of his police license, to polish shoes on the Tauentzienstrasse; the opera singer who cleaned cars and slept in a cellar.

But the priest's interest went deeper than those of a humanitarian. Berlin was too full of spiritual *malaise* to be healed by anything less than Charity. The various associations he had founded—the University Study Circle, the People's Reading Room, The Graduates Vincent de Paul Society, the Catholic *Volkhochschule*—all were but different ways of realizing a twofold purpose: firstly to give spiritual and intellectual formation to men and women, secondly so to arouse in these a sense of their Christian vocation that they would become a force in the transformation of Berlin. Fr. Sonnenschein urged Catholics to emerge from the ghetto and to show to a city sunk in selfish paganism the glory and truth of Charity. He spoke frequently and with deep feeling, of the Church Catholic as the outpouring of God's love upon earth; of the

obligation placed upon Catholics of showing to others the heart of the Church which is love; that in a great city the apologetic of the word only is ineffective: you have to make it realize the truth in its heart and that means one thing and one thing only: you have to show it the meaning of love.

Little is related of Fr. Sonnenschein's personal life. It was obvious to all that he never spared himself. After his early Mass and private prayers he would set out for the office and do an eight to ten hour stretch there—writing, interviewing, telephoning, dictating. In addition he had several lecture engagements a week. These were in the late evening and had to be delivered with no other preparation than the time taken by the street-car to bring him to his destination. And wherever he spoke, whether in an imposing lecture hall, or in a smoke-filled suburban restaurant, men were moved. He captivated because he himself was wholly captivated; he vitalized because his personal life reflected the Source of all life.

Of comforts and amenities, he knew little. The chilly porter's lodge, which was his 'house,' was separated by no more than a glass door from the stone floor of the hospital. Entirely selfless as he was, he seemed content with a brief and often disturbed night's rest. Distressed at the sight of his threadbare overcoat, friends prevailed upon him in the last winter of his life, to accept the present of a new one. He appeared at the office within the week wearing the old bottle-green coat. His apologies were profuse. The man whom he had met could not heat his garret; no, he had not enquired the stranger's name and address.

In the autumn of 1928, after much suffering, Fr. Carl Sonnenschein died. He had accomplished so much so quietly, and in so short a time that the journalists dubbed him 'God's flying column.' For innumerable souls in Berlin he proved to be a light shining in the darkness. And there he achieved his priesthood's ideal; in being an *alter Christus*.

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# Book Reviews

## THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

FR. GABRIEL, O.D.C.

(The Mercier Press).

8/6.

FR. GABRIEL is the foremost Carmelite authority on the writings of St. John of the Cross, and this volume completes a trilogy now available in English. 'The three small works may be viewed,' says their author, 'as different parts of one study, which is intended to show in how masterly a fashion St. John of the Cross has faced and solved the most difficult practical problems in the life of prayer. With this, we wish to contribute to the endeavour . . . to construct an orderly science of spiritual direction.' Fr. Gabriel urges in strong terms—but not so strong as those used by St. John himself—the need for such a science. 'There is an urgent need of good directors. Souls are waiting for them. . . . We must repeat with the saint: Many souls do not reach a higher standard of spiritual life because there is no one to guide them to the heights; to put before them the ideal of sanctity in all its attractive clarity; who can understand the trials which they necessarily meet with on the way thither. . . . For all this, knowledge is required, and this knowledge is undoubtedly too rarely found.' (pp. 130-1).

The book under review provides its readers with a goodly store of knowledge about how St. John of the Cross led his Carmelite brethren and sisters and some others also, along the way of perfection. We fully agree with Fr. Gabriel that 'the rich flowering of contemplatives in the Carmelite cloisters in the first generations of the Reform of Saint Theresa, when St. John's influence made itself more strongly felt, shows how efficient was his teaching, his "education".' (p. 67). We may also 'heartily wish that the works of St. John of the Cross were in the hands of all directors, and the object of repeated reading and study.' (p. 66). Nevertheless, we must not forget St. John's own warning, in the prologue to the *Ascent of Carmel*: 'My principal object is not to address myself to all, but to certain persons of our holy order of Mount Carmel, of the primitive observance.'

A critic might even say that the title *The Spiritual Director* is a misleading one for the present work; but as soon as one opens it, one realises that its scope is limited to the theme: St. John of the Cross as Spiritual Director. St. John himself found guidance chiefly in the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas, about whom Fr. Gabriel when he is discussing (on p. 40), 'the most famous writers,' read and studied by St. John is strangely silent. His silence is in marked contrast with the avowal of other

authorities. For instance, in the General Introduction to *The Complete Works of St. John of the Cross*, edited by Professor Alison Peers, one reads: 'The Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy characterises the whole of his writings, giving them a granite-like solidity, even when their theme is such as to defy human speculation. It gives massiveness, harmony and unity to both the ascetic and mystical work of St. John of the Cross. St. Thomas' clear decisive reasoning processes, give us the formula appropriate to each and every need of the understanding: St. John clothes his teaching in mellower and more appealing language.' (pp. XXXVIII, XLVI). More than ever from reading a book like Fr. Gabriel's one realises how true it is that, in the words of Pope Pius XI (*Studiorum Ducem*), 'if anyone desires to understand fully, all the implications of the commandment to love God, the growth of virtue and conjoined gifts of the Holy Ghost . . . the state of perfection . . . all those and other articles of ascetical and mystical theology, he must have recourse in the first place to the Angelic Doctor.'

Æ.D.

## SOCIETY AND SANITY

F. J. SHEED

(Sheed &amp; Ward).

10/6

THIS is just the book we've been waiting for—a study of society without pouring on too much of the midnight oil. Indeed, reading it, one scarcely feels any tax on the mind. There are no lengthy footnotes; no known and unknown authorities parade through its pages. It's a book full of ordinary sanity put in a clear-cut fashion. Although it lacks all the '*paraphernalia*' of the scholar, it contains, without any doubt whatever, the result of many years of scholarship. A man who has spent the best years of his life on Catholic Evidence is driven by the force of relentless controversy to think out the problems for himself. To quote this encyclical and that, this great theologian and that one, carries little weight on such a rostrum. That is why Mr. Sheed can give us now so much sanity with such ease; it is the catechesis of an oft-spoken oral tradition.

Mr. Sheed's power of putting things concisely is amazing. About equality he writes: '*Does the fact of being a man, in which all are alike, outweigh the difference between genius and stupidity, energy and indolence? Only if man matters. In the Christian view, being a man is itself so vast a thing, that the natural inequalities from one man to the next are a trifle by comparison. In the Christian view, but in no other.*' (p. 33). Again and again, Mr. Sheed stresses the need for reverence. A complete chapter is devoted to the deference due to man. '*To use God's name without reverence is normally a lesser profanity compared with using God's image without reverence: God is more vulnerable in the living man made in His likeness than in the sound by which men have chosen to name Him.*' (p. 37). But in

order to keep this attitude of reverence to man, one must, of course, remember the presence of God in His creature. What happens to a man and woman who love each other without God? *'A man and woman, falling in love and knowing nothing of God, almost inevitably make each other the object of that power to adore which is in them as human beings and which for want of its true object works upon them tormentingly. Each adores the other. Each expects of the other what in fact only God can give—a total satisfaction of every deepest need. Naturally, neither gets what he wants. . . . Then the tendency is to feel resentful, as though a promise had been made and not kept; and the resentment grows, as each comes to the end of the other's resources, and the emptiness each becomes for the other a grimmer nightmare with every day that passes.'* (p. 59).

On page 208 we read: *'that the people who would prefer England sober are prepared to curtail personal responsibility: so are the people whose dream is geometrical equality or any other sort of geometrical symmetry in social and political life.'* I wonder if this is correct? According to St. Thomas' use of the phrase *'geometrical equality'*, it is the object of distributive justice, and, of course, the dream of every planner of society. Should this be *'arithmetic equality'*?

This book should be read by every member of Dail and Seanad Eireann. One wonders sometimes if they are reading and thinking enough. An act of parliament is always an act of political prudence. Like every other act of prudence it should be backed up by much counsel-seeking, docility and understanding. To forge stubbornly ahead is anything but an act of prudence, and almost lacks the essential characteristic of sanity. The long months of recess afford a T.D. much leisure for reading and thinking, and contributing to the Party Policy a little more than his *'Placet.'* J.T.

## ST. PAUL'S GOSPEL

MONSIGNOR RONALD KNOX

(Sheed & Ward).

7/6.

THIS BOOK contains a series of Lenten conferences preached by Monsignor Knox at Westminster, in 1950. Here, they are written out in the clear, fresh and original style of their author; only here and there could one pick out passages that seem better suited to listeners than to readers. In each chapter some favourite theme of St. Paul is analysed. But to appreciate the analysis one should be familiar with the epistles. For that reason I recommend this little book as a text for a Study Circle, which would give a year to the study of St. Paul. In Ireland the laity needs something to stir up interest in the Sacred Scriptures. A piety, that strays away from them is never sane. A short book of this kind may not clear up all our difficulties in reading the epistles of St. Paul. It will, however, entice us to read more of the full New Testament. For, though it is not all a gospel in the accepted sense of the word, it certainly contains all the good news about Our Lord Jesus Christ. J.T.

## DOCTRINE IN DIAGRAMS

J. MURTAGH, S.M.A.

IN PRE-WAR DAYS, it was a rare thing to find an illustrated catechetical book, emanating from Irish writers. Nowadays it is a rare thing to find a catechetical book which is not illustrated. We have come a long way; we seem to have come from one extreme to the other. There is a danger in this. The uncritical use of visual aids is as detrimental as their complete absence. Too frequently nowadays, we come across unintelligent handling of pictures or diagrams which are supposed to help our memory or our understanding. This being so, it is a very great pleasure to welcome a most intelligent catechetical work in which text and visual aids are skilfully interrelated, so as to afford the maximum help to both teacher and pupil. *Doctrine in Diagrams* is printed in Cairo and available from the African Mission Fathers, Blackrock Rd., Cork. The book consists of fourteen brief chapters, each chapter being summed up in an original and helpful visual aid and reduced to skilful questions by way of test. There is a finish, a freshness and an originality about this work which is most commendable. Personally, I am glad to hail this book with a warm welcome indeed and when I recommend it to the attention of teachers, I do so in no perfunctory manner but because of its excellence in form, matter, production, and presentation. Perhaps this is Fr. Murtagh's first catechetical venture. I certainly hope it will not be his last, and I am very glad to note that he has joined that band of catechetical writers headed by Dr. Kelly, S.M.A., within his own Order. It is a very good thing indeed when Missionary experience is brought to help us here at home. Thank you Fr. Murtagh!

J.F.F.

## SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER

JAMES BRODRICK, S.J.

(Burns Oates).

548 pp.

30/-.

THE PRESENT century has seen many experiments and advances in hagiography. Gone, in large part, are the apocryphal gospels of the saints, the pompous panegyric, the misleading adulation. In their place came analytical essays uncovering the inner secret of a life, some, like Chesterton's, mainly apologetic; others on the French model, systematic studies in asceticism. For chapter titles ideas and virtues replaced events; the spiritual ages replaced the natural. The change was welcome but recent writers would seem to be asking if the pendulum swung too far; among them Father Brodrick, if one is to judge by this remarkable work on St. Francis.

There are not many like it. It is novel, but in a sense other than that which gives a novelty an attraction independently of its value. It reads like a novel, for it is a picture of a person in workday clothes, easily distinguished from either a Sunday best portrait or a laboratory chart. Imagination abounds, not to invent like an historical novel but to bring up and highlight detail necessary for an accurate human picture. It is novel in its unusually successful effort to cater simultaneously for the critical reader of history and for the reader who has one eye on the Holy Ghost, hoping for an enlightenment of mind and an enlargement of heart. Firm but unobtrusive proof abounds of sifting and evaluation of sources; much of the appeal of the book lies in the quiet humour that marks the destruction of distorted images of the saint.

Private letters are an unconscious autobiography. But the humanity and personality are revealed only to those who can retrieve from past ages and distant places, those well nigh intangible nuances of atmosphere, phrasing, metaphor and slang that give words the power of conjuring up the personality of him who uses them. We cannot pass judgment on the merits of the translation made here of Francis' letters, but trusting in ordinary ability to recognise living English we feel like drawing a parallel with the Knox translation of the Scriptures.

These and other sources have given us a new Francis. He is no longer the miracle-working missionary, the apostle armed with the gift of tongues, the giant killer before whom all obstacles lie down; neither is he the restless globe-trotter suffering from an insatiable wanderlust. Instead we find a Francis who massacres native names, displaying a knowledge (or ignorance) of scores of eastern languages one would expect in an untrained Spaniard swotting between labours, at lessons given by poorly equipped teachers; we find a Francis laboriously teaching basic Christianity sometimes with a less than basic vocabulary; we find a Francis horrified on discovering that in his preaching to the Japanese, he had been using a word for 'God' that expressed an idea of the divinity about as far from theological accuracy as it could be.

Most of the miracles, too, are made to vanish in the same entertaining style as the gift of tongues. In their place we are given the miracle of grace, of power that goes out from a personality and is recognised by men of good will, as it went out and was seen in the case of Him Who had it in its infinite fulness.

Nor is the secret of this power left unanalysed. Time and again Francis describes it, as when he writes advice for future missionaries: 'They must strive mightily to conquer themselves and cast from their hearts, all fears and anxieties which would impede the growth of faith and hope and loving trust in God.'

V.L.

# SAINT TERESA OF AVILA

MARCELLE AUCLAIR,

(Burns Oates).<sup>1</sup>

30/-.

SAINT TERESA OF AVILA, it must be admitted, is not a 'popular' saint, although, when she was alive, the great charm of her personality was readily recognised. It is not because she lived so long ago: there are many more popular saints farther removed from us by time. Perhaps, our lack of devotion to Saint Teresa arises from lack of understanding. We somehow expect of a woman saint that she should advance along the 'royal road' of spiritual progress by the way of intuitive love. With Saint Teresa it was different. She was accused during her lifetime of having a masculine intelligence and it may be fairly said about her that she 'reasoned' herself into sanctity. 'God created man free to choose perfection,' says Marcelle Auclair. 'This act of the will is what He wants,' says Saint Teresa and in her spiritual writings the word 'determination' occurs again and again.

This aspect of Saint Teresa is clearly revealed in Marcelle Auclair's study of her but it is not over-emphasised so as to present an unbalanced picture of her character. The author has done an immense work of research, as the imposing bibliography at the end of her book shows and she has assembled facts and quotations from many sources with fine selectiveness and skill. The book could have been an unwieldy, disjointed hotch-potch of passages chosen from already existing lives and histories but the very frequent quotations are bound into a coherent narrative by intelligent, often perspicacious and sometimes humorous comment.

The great charm of this book, apart from its obvious careful scholarship, is its clear presentation of Saint Teresa as a very human person. In it, we see the author of *The Interior Castle*, 'one of the clearest treatises on mental prayer that exists,' telling her sisters in religion that they can find Our Lord 'among the pots and pans' and herself always busy, polishing, sweeping, spinning and cooking. (She was an excellent cook, even though she was a mystic and sometimes overtaken by ecstasies while at the stove). This study of Saint Teresa should banish for ever the idea that mysticism and commonsense are incompatible.

As well, of course, she was a great organiser, energetic and clear-headed, as she had need to be in order to establish her reforms in Spain at the end of the sixteenth century. The historical background is vividly evoked and the detailed accounts of the jealousies and intrigues which hampered the Saint's work would be very disedifying if they were not counterbalanced by description of the perfect humility and charity with which she bore persecution.

This is an excellent introduction for anyone who wishes to begin a serious study of Saint Teresa. The book has the further merit of not reading like a translation.

W.N.

## DON FRANCISCO—The Story of St. Francis Xavier

MARY PURCELL

Gill

339 pp.

12/6.

FOR ALL its readableness, Fr. Brodrick's presentation of St. Francis, will reach the faithful mostly through the medium of the Church Teaching. Miss Purcell's *Don Francisco*, in appearance more a story than a study, will probably have, in this country, a wider circle of immediate influence. It is less obviously intent on what Fr. Brodrick describes as 'the task of finding the real Xavier, under the great pyramid of pious accretion;' but when one measures it for accuracy of essential detail, with the yardstick of Fr. Brodrick, the result is very satisfactory. One is free then to enjoy the author's use of inventive imagination, the sequences of unstilted conversation, the reconstructions of intimate scenes of life in castle, convent, lodging-house and school; of life on the road and on the sea; the pauses in the narrative in which the camera is turned from the scenes of Francis at work to sweep across the wider scenes of a Europe in its hour of greatest religious turmoil.

V.L.

## Books Received:

- BURNS, OATES, Jean Helle *Miracles*, 15/-  
 BURNS, OATES, Herbert Thurston, S.J., *Familiar Prayers, Their Origin and History*, 16/-  
 CLONMORE & REYNOLDS, Rev. J. G. McGarry, *Sermon Notes on the Sunday Gospels*, 15/-  
 CLONMORE & REYNOLDS, Bernard J. Kelly, C.S.Sp., *Progress in the Religious Life*, 9/6  
 BLACKFRIARS, Sister Mary Laurence, O.P., *Within the Walls*, 2/6.  
 MERCIER PRESS, Baron Von Gagern, M.D., *Difficulties in Married Life* 6/-  
 MERCIER PRESS, Rev. John Morson, O.C.R., *The Gift of God*, 12/6  
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